

ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

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AUTHORITY	BOARD OF GOVERNORS
PRIMARY CONTACT	ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

POLICY

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) regards the use of animals in research, teaching, testing and production as a privilege and not a right. All individuals involved in the use of animals for research, teaching, testing and production must care for their animals in compliance with the TRU Animal Care Committee (TRU-ACC) protocols, the Canadian Council for Animal Care (CCAC) Guidelines and in accordance with Sections 444-447 of the Criminal Code of Canada and Section 24 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

REGULATIONS

I. ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE OF TRU (TRU-ACC)

1. TRU establishes the Thompson Rivers University Animal Care Committee (TRU-ACC) to ensure that TRU upholds the highest standards in the care of animals used for teaching, research, testing and production. The TRU-ACC is established in compliance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) policy statement which requires that institutions conducting animal-based research, teaching or testing establish an animal care committee, and that it be functionally active.
2. The committee's operations are governed by the Regulations herein which will be reviewed on an annual basis to reflect any changes in CCAC guidelines and policies, or make changes that are compliant and would improve function.
3. This committee reports directly to the Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (AVP RGS) who is the senior administrator of TRU responsible for ensuring that all animal care and use is conducted appropriately, according to institutional and CCAC policies and guidelines. The AVP RGS shall receive copies of all of the TRU-ACC meeting minutes and site visit reports, and meet regularly with the Chair of the TRU-ACC to ensure that any concerns are addressed and that the committee is functioning appropriately.

II. COMPOSITION

1. Membership

One (1) Veterinarian from the Animal Health Technology program, who shall be designated as the "University Veterinarian" (ex officio*);

Two (2) Faculty members from Biological Sciences and/or Natural Resource Science, and one faculty member from another discipline experienced in animal care and use, one of whom is an active investigator;

One (1) Technical Staff representative from Animal Health Technology;

One (1) Faculty member or Staff representative from the TRU community at-large who does not work with animals;

One (1) TRU Student Representative;

One (1) volunteer Veterinarian from the community;

Two (2) volunteer representatives from the community, with no affiliation to TRU, who are not involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing;

One (1) member from each affiliated institution (e.g. Selkirk College) for which there is a formal MOU for the use and care of animals involved in teaching, research, testing or production;

One (1) designate from the office of the Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies who will serve as the coordinator of the TRU-ACC, and is non-voting.

**ex officio means by virtue of position or status. This is a full voting member of the committee.*

2. Chair

The Chair is to be chosen from among the Committee members. The Chair should normally be an animal user with good experience in animal use and care, but not be directly involved in the management of the institutional animal facilities, nor be involved in the preparation of a significant number of the protocols to be reviewed by the committee, in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

3. Term

Members are to serve a three-year term (renewable, up to a maximum of 6 years continuous service); the student member may serve a one-year term.

4. Quorum

A quorum will consist of six (6) voting members, and must include a Veterinarian and a community volunteer.

III. REPORTING STRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATION

1. Committee Reporting Responsibility

This committee reports to the AVP RGS, who is the senior university administrator responsible for animal care. The AVP RGS must receive all TRU-ACC meeting minutes and site visit reports.

2. The University Veterinarian Reporting Responsibility

The University Veterinarian shall report to the AVP RGS on issues related to animal care and research compliance, and shall serve as an ex officio member of the TRU-ACC.

The duties of the University Veterinarian include:

- a. Oversight of the campus-wide animal care and use programs, ensuring adequate animal care and management of all animal facilities, with regular updates to the TRU-ACC of activities in the animal care facilities;
- b. Provision of advice to and participation in the education and training of animal users and animal care givers;
- c. Participation in the development, implementation and review of standard operating procedures for animal care and use, as well as institutional animal care and use policies;
- d. Active participation as a member of the TRU-ACC with responsibility for monitoring of the implementation of TRU-ACC decisions and institutional policies.

3. Communication

The TRU-ACC must communicate frequently with the animal care and use community as a whole with respect to general matters (explanations of the role of the TRU-ACC and of practical animal care and use matters including information for protocol submission and TRU-ACC meeting schedules, policies, SOPs, training opportunities, etc.), and with animal users, veterinary and animal care staff, hazardous substances committees, occupational health and safety groups and officials and others as often as needed, to ensure that the program is functioning appropriately.

IV. AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE

The TRU-ACC, and the University Veterinarian, have the authority on behalf of the head of the institution to:

1. Stop any procedure if the Committee/University Veterinarian considers that unnecessary distress or pain is being experienced by an animal;

2. Stop any use of animals that deviates from the approved use, or follows any non-approved procedure or a procedure that causes unforeseen pain or distress to animals;
3. Have an animal euthanized humanely if pain or distress caused to the animal cannot be alleviated.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations and establish procedures, commensurate with current veterinary standards, to ensure that:
 - unnecessary pain or distress is avoided;
 - anesthesia and analgesia are properly and effectively used;
 - appropriate post-operative care is provided;
 - all due consideration is given to animal welfare, including environmental enrichment.
2. Ensure that no research or teaching projects involving animals (including field studies and internally-funded projects) be commenced without prior Committee approval of a written animal use protocol.
3. Ensure that no animals be held for display or breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research or teaching projects, without prior Committee approval of a written animal use protocol.
4. Ensure that for research projects, a peer review of scientific merit is carried out according to CCAC guidelines. The Committee will also review the pedagogical merit of teaching protocols.
5. Review and assess all animal use protocols, with particular emphasis on CCAC's Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals (1993), Ethics of Animal Experimentation (1989), and Guidelines for Animal Use Protocol Review. The committee must ensure that animal users report any unanticipated problems or complications, as well as on the steps they have taken to address the problem(s).
6. Review all protocols annually, and approve any modifications to a protocol prior to implementation. Major changes to a protocol require that a new one be submitted. The Committee requires the submission of a new full protocol after three (3) consecutive renewals.
7. Ensure that applications for review and renewal are carried out by at least one veterinarian, a faculty member and a community representative and that they include:
 - Practical information and results from the previous year to ensure that the Three Rs (Reduction, Replacement, Refinement) are applied, any concerns encountered and possible refinements, and take into consideration,
 - The number of animals used in the previous year,
 - A justification for the number of animals to be used in the new year,

- Information on the way in which appropriate endpoints were applied and how they might be refined.
8. Undertake annual site visits of institutional animal research and teaching facilities, with written records, and ensure the security of the animals and research facilities.
 9. Ensure that all animal users are familiar with CCAC's Guide and Ethics statements, and are informed of and comply with federal, provincial and municipal regulations as well as TRU's animal care and use policies.
 10. Recommend and oversee training programs and qualifications for technical staff and others involved in the care and use of animals, according to the CCAC Guidelines on institutional animal user training.
 11. Review and oversee the crisis management program for the animal care facilities in conjunction with the general institutional crisis management plan and CCAC Policy.
 12. Establish, implement and regularly review policies and standard operating procedures to ensure that all animal care and animal experimentation are conducted according to CCAC guidelines and policies, and according to any federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect. The Committee must regularly review its Terms of Reference to meet new CCAC guidelines or policies and changing needs within the institution, the scientific community, the animal welfare community and society as a whole.
 13. Prepare Annual Use Data Forms to be submitted to Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) by March 31 of each year, and maintain liaison with the CCAC Secretariat.
 14. Deal with matters referred to them by TRU and the Canadian Council on Animal Care.

VI. PROCEDURES

1. Meetings and Site Inspections

The TRU-ACC shall hold at least 3 meetings per year, shortly following protocol submission deadlines. The Committee shall also conduct at least one site inspection of all animal care facilities per year. Minutes shall be recorded for all meetings and site inspections. All discussions, recommendations and decisions made by the Committee regarding protocols and their implementation shall be recorded in the minutes and copies of protocols, recommendations and approvals shall be kept on file in the Office of the AVP RGS. Conditional approval of protocols shall be followed up in the minutes of the next TRU-ACC meeting.

2. Site Inspections

All members of the Committee are encouraged to participate in annual site inspections of the animal care facilities. Recommendations following site inspections shall be recorded and forwarded to the Chair of the appropriate Department and to the AVP

RGS. Responses to the committee's recommendations shall be recorded in the minutes of the next TRU-ACC meeting.

3. Submission of protocols

Protocol forms shall be available online. All relevant sections must be completed and the form signed by the investigator/instructor and the Chair of the appropriate Department. Failure to complete the form may delay approval. The original form and 12 copies must be submitted to the Chair by the following deadlines:

For projects to start in: September January April

Protocols must be submitted in: June October January

The Committee will attempt to accommodate the occasional project/exercise that must be approved on short notice.

4. Protocol review

- a. The committee shall discuss protocols and make decisions on them during full committee meetings, rather than through individual reviews, although comments from committee members who cannot attend the meeting shall be considered. The committee shall attempt to reach decisions by consensus. All committee discussions, recommendations and decisions shall be documented in the committee minutes and on attachments to the protocol forms. Conditional approval of protocols shall be followed up in the minutes of the next TRU-ACC meeting.
- b. Interim approvals and protocol renewals may be delegated to a protocol review subcommittee, which must include at least one scientific member, one veterinarian and one community representative, one of which should preferably be the TRU-ACC chair. Interim approvals must be subject to discussion and final approval at a full meeting of the committee.
- c. The committee must ensure that all procedures detailed in animal use protocols comply with CCAC guidelines, and, if at variance with those guidelines, the committee requires justification for the variance on scientific/pedagogical grounds. Where necessary, the committee may request further supportive information from the investigator/instructor or may request a meeting with the investigator/instructor to ensure that all members of the committee understand the procedures to be used on the animal(s).
- d. The Committee shall consider the following general principles in the protocol review process:
 - that the use of animals in research, teaching and testing is acceptable only if it promises to contribute to the understanding of environmental principles or

- issues; fundamental biological principles; or development of knowledge that can reasonably be expected to benefit humans, animals or the environment;
- that optimal standards for animal health and care result in enhanced credibility and reproducibility of experimental results;
 - that acceptance of animal use in science critically depends on maintaining public confidence in the mechanisms and processes used to ensure necessary, humane and justified animal use;
 - that animals should be used only if the researcher's best efforts to find an alternative have failed; and
 - that those using animals should employ the most humane methods on the smallest number of appropriate animals required to obtain valid information.
- e. Protocols involving physical and/or psychological distress will be fully reviewed and require strong scientific justification that is clearly supported by current knowledge.

5. Peer review of Research Protocols

- a. The committee must ensure that, for research projects, a peer review of scientific merit is carried out. Where TRU-ACC approval is required by the funding agency before it will review the application, TRU-ACC approval will be provisional, pending assurance from the funding agency that the application has scientific merit.
- b. Where evidence of good peer review is absent, the TRU-ACC shall solicit two reviews of the objectives, hypotheses, methods and contributions of the project by knowledgeable scientists who do not collaborate with the investigator. As a minimum, one referee must be external to the Committee. The reviews must be documented and must contain sufficient information to support the reviewers' conclusion(s). Reviewers shall be directed to the CCAC Guidelines on Animal Use Protocol Review.

VII. APPEAL PROCEDURES

The intent of the TRU-ACC is to resolve concerns of the Committee with the investigator. The TRU-ACC Chair will invite the investigator, if necessary, to meet with the Committee. The investigator has the right to appeal if the final decision of the TRU-ACC is to reject a protocol. The request for appeal is made to the AVP RGS, who shall ensure that a separate, fair and impartial review of the protocol is made by at least three external reviewers, with the appropriate expertise, who do not collaborate with the investigator. Reviewers shall be agreed upon by the TRU-ACC and the investigator.

VIII. ANIMAL-BASED PROJECTS INVOLVING OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The TRU-ACC must be aware of and must approve all use of animals by TRU Faculty and Staff while working at, or in collaboration with, other institutions, and all use and care of animals in TRU facilities.

Where multiple research partners are involved in a project, or where TRU faculty are working at another institution, or in collaboration with another institution, through which a project is funded, TRU investigators must provide a copy of an approved Animal Care Protocol from the sponsoring institution to the TRU-ACC. Questions and concerns about the protocol shall be directed by the Chair of the TRU-ACC to the investigator and to the Chair of the sponsoring institution's Animal Care Committee for resolution. The TRU-ACC shall be responsible for oversight of all animal-based projects undertaken in TRU facilities, to ensure that all procedures are ethically acceptable and comply with all CCAC and legislative standards. Arrangements for monitoring the welfare of animals shall be in place between the Animal Care Committees of all institutions involved in the project before the project begins. (See CCAC Guidelines on Animal-Based Projects Involving Two or more Institutions)